

FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

For Organizing and Defining the Work Components to be Measured in the California Child Welfare Services Workload Study

Purpose The goal of each focus group is develop two lists of work components that can be used as a basis for constructing time recording codes for the workload study. These lists are: (1) A list of units of service, major activities or services, and (2) a list of tasks that are performed for the services. For example, Investigations would be a unit of service or activity or service. Contact with the client, forms completion, etc. would be tasks. These lists will be produced for 3 areas:

1. To identify, organize and define the Child Welfare caseworker work components (services/activities and tasks) which will be measured in the work measurement study.
2. To identify, organize and define the Child Welfare clerical work components (services/activities and tasks) which will be measured in the work measurement study.
3. To identify, organize and define the Child Welfare supervisory work components (services/activities and tasks) which will be measured in the work measurement study.

Time It is anticipated that each focus group will take about six hours to complete.

Focus Group Composition/Participants

Ideally, there will be a maximum of 20 participants per focus group. However some regional groupings of counties encompass up to 13 counties; up to 26 participants will be accommodated for those regions so that each county has the discretion to send 1 or 2 participants. For regions in which a combination of large, small, and medium-sized counties is represented, a population-based approach will be utilized to determine the number of participants from each county.

- **Caseworkers:**

Caseworkers chosen by the counties to participate in the focus groups should be among the county's more experienced, and should represent a range of casework issues and service delivery approaches.

- **Supervisors:**

It would also be beneficial if supervisors selected by the counties for participation are among the more experienced supervisors, have previous experience as caseworkers, and also represent a range of casework issues and service delivery approaches.

- **Clerical:**

Clerical staff should have an indepth knowledge of the scope of clerical activities involved with child welfare services.

- **Administrators**

For the focus groups, there should be selective representation of administrators, i.e., one or two administrators per focus group to provide a broad managerial/administrative perspective. (Administrators are also participating in the Advisory Group for the project and will also be represented in that manner.)

Participant Selection Criteria The following attributes should be represented:

- **Geographic Representation**

- Metropolitan, urban, rural; each county cluster

- **Service Delivery Approach**

- Generic and specialized, direct service, contracted services
- All major areas/services should be represented, e.g. Preventive Services, Child Protection Services (Intake/Investigation), Follow-up or Out-of-Home services, Adoptions, etc., Support Services such as Foster and Adoptive Home Development, Specialized Support Services such as Out-of-Town Inquiries, Home Studies, etc.

- **Expertise**

- The participants must have expert knowledge and in-depth experience in the areas they are representing (no novices).

- **Group Communication Skills**

- **Willingness to participate (cooperative attitude)**